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amount due for parking for said duration in the parking zone so that the device functions as a parking meter;

signal generation means for selectively generating a warning signal in response to the comparison;

5 display means for displaying the monetary amount due; and
monetary receiving means for receiving the monetary amount due.

Further in accordance with the invention, there is provided a device for monitoring and identifying a vehicle in at least one parking zone, the device including

10 a housing shaped and dimensioned to be hand-held within which is housed:

input means for feeding input identification particulars of a vehicle in a parking zone into the device;

15 communication means for sending the input identification particulars to a remote station and for receiving the result of a comparison performed at the remote station between the input identification particulars and the reference identification particulars in order to identify the vehicle;

20 signal generation means for selectively generating a warning signal in response to said result;

timing means for timing the duration for which the vehicle is parked in the parking zone;

processor means for calculating a monetary amount due for parking for said duration in the parking zone;

25 display means for displaying the monetary amount due; and
monetary receiving means for receiving the monetary amount due.

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The monetary receiving means may include card reading means for reading information stored on a card and feeding it to the processor means for processing payment electronically.

The processor means may define the timing means.

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The identification particulars may be displayed on the display means. In the event of the particulars corresponding, the observed particulars may be checked prior to generating the warning signal. The storage means may thus include data defining a rate payable by the driver, e.g. a rate per hour during the day, during the evening, and so on.

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The device may include a printer for printing a hard-copy of selected data.

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The input means may include a keypad via which the identification particulars of the vehicle and the parking zone are manually entered. In addition or instead, the input means may include a reader capable of reading in a wireless fashion a tag device in or on the vehicle, the tag device carrying the said identification particulars of the vehicle. The identification particulars are typically particulars observed by a supervisor and fed into the device.

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The communication means is typically a wireless communication link.

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In other embodiments, the communication channel may be a hardwired link, an RF link, or any other conventional communication link.

5 In certain embodiments, the device includes enabling means for selectively enabling the device. The enabling means may be defined by the processor means and the input means in such a fashion so that upon entry of a correct PIN number the device is enabled. The PIN code may be communicated between the base station and the remote unit.

10 The reference identification particulars are typically reference identification particulars of stolen vehicles. Accordingly, the reference particulars may be the make, colour, registration number or the like of the vehicle.

The housing is preferably waterproof.

15 Further in accordance with the invention, there is provided a system for monitoring and identifying vehicles in a plurality of parking zones, the system including

a remote station at which reference identification particulars of vehicles are stored; and

20 at least one device for identifying a vehicle parked in one of a plurality of parking zones with which the device is associated, the device including a housing shaped and dimensioned to be hand-held within which is housed:

input means for feeding input identification particulars of a vehicle parked in a parking zone into the device;